



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**January 27, 2021**

**House Bill 401  
Public Schools – Pregnant and Parenting Students – Policies and Reports**

**House Ways and Means Committee**

**Position: SUPPORT**

The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch)dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

**House Bill 401** requires the Maryland State Department of Education to develop a model policy to support the educational goals of pregnant and parenting students which includes providing a private lactation room for breastfeeding, advice for parenting students on transportation and childcare, training personnel on the policy and inputting the policy in the student handbook. The bill also requires each County Department of Education to establish a policy to support pregnant and parenting students' educational goals.

The Maryland Catholic Conference supports HB 401 because it ensures that a young mother receives the support she needs to continue her education. Many pregnant and parenting students experience discrimination, lag behind their peers in educational achievement or drop out of school which in turn affects the lifetime wellbeing of these mothers and their children. Just 38% of teen mothers will earn a high school diploma by age 18 ([ChildTrends](#), "Diploma Attainment Among Teen Mothers").

Too often a student mother is forced to choose between her child and her dreams for educational attainment. Providing necessary accommodations to each student mother's unique situation will help her achieve academic equity and address the challenges she faces.

It is for these reasons that the Maryland Catholic Conference respectfully urges a favorable report for **HB 401**. Thank you for your consideration.